



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 12 April 1968



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DAILY BRIEF
12 APRIL 1968

1. South Vietnam

More signs are appearing that Communist main force units in several parts of the country are pulling back from areas that had until recently been of high tactical interest. In the Khe Sanh area, small-scale enemy rear guard actions seem designed to cover withdrawal of major North Vietnamese combat units.

Communications intelligence also points to withdrawals farther south in I Corps. [REDACTED]

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It is too soon to know whether these movements are aimed at creating the impression of Communist military restraint. They could be responses to pressure from allied operations or, in some cases, simply to a need for re-supplying and reinforcing the units involved.

2. France-Israel

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3. Egypt-Jordan

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4. West Berlin

The shooting of a militant student leader yesterday will further inflame the city's leftist students. They had already been organizing anti-US demonstrations for Easter weekend. If these come off as planned, the situation could become ugly.

5. Poland

Gomulka may have won the first round in the struggle against the hardliners around Interior Minister Moczar. This is our tentative assessment of the government changes announced yesterday. The turmoil inside the party is still far from being under control, however, and Gomulka has yet to respond to the demands of the younger, reform-minded elements in the party.

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6. Turkey

High government officials are urging postponement of the US naval visits scheduled for later this month. They are afraid the visits may be marred by demonstrations set off by the growing leftist campaign against Turkey's participation in NATO.

7. Rhodesia

Ian Smith's special commission has come up with a new draft of constitutional proposals. This is the worst yet from the British point of view. If this document is adopted, it will be generations before the country's blacks could legally obtain even political parity with the whites.

8. Netherlands

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Hanoi Criticises US Refusal of Phnom Penh as Site for "Contacts": The US was accused of "finding illegitimate pretexts" for refusing to meet in the Cambodian capital. The blast was transmitted early today on Hanoi radio's international service in English. The broadcast claimed to be a translation of a commentary in today's issue of the party daily, Nhan Dan.

The commentary reviewed Hanoi's 3 April statement agreeing to "contacts" with the US and claimed that this had met with "approval and support from broad public opinion in the world and even in the US." The commentary then recalled Trinh's interview with Charles Collingwood when Phnom Penh, "or another place mutually to be agreed upon," was suggested. The commentary noted that Collingwood had been told that "in the course of this contact, the American side will specify the date when the unconditional cessation of the US bombing raids...will become effective, then the two sides will reach agreement on the procedure of the formal talks."

The commentary then went on at length to describe Sihanouk's initial approval of Phnom Penh as the site for "contacts" and his subsequent criticism of the US for turning it down. Sihanouk was quoted

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as "demanding" that the US halt the bombing of North Vietnam and accept "a dialogue" with the National Liberation Front which, Sihanouk said, "the Americans should recognize as the only authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people."

The commentary concluded by stating that President Johnson had more than once declared that the US would go anywhere and at any time to meet North Vietnamese representatives. The US refusal to meet in Phnom Penh, it claimed, "shows that its acts do not match its words."

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First Quarter Shipping Report: A preliminary review of shipping to North Vietnam during the first quarter of 1968 shows an 18 percent increase in cargo deliveries over the same period last year. The

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increase can be accounted for by the continuing rise in food and petroleum products.

Soviet deliveries to North Vietnam declined slightly in the first quarter compared to the corresponding period last year. Although food and petroleum deliveries out of Soviet Far Eastern ports increased, deliveries of fertilizer and miscellaneous cargoes normally shipped out of Black Sea ports decreased sharply. The decrease in shipping from Black Sea ports may be due largely to the closure of the Suez Canal.

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Cargo deliveries to North Vietnam aboard East European ships doubled over the same period in 1967. It is likely that much of this increase reflects agreements reached between the East European countries and Hanoi in the fall of 1967 for increased economic aid.

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Deliveries of cargo from Communist China rose significantly. However, the tonnage carried by Chinese ships dropped, while that carried by Chinese-chartered Free World ships increased. As a result, total deliveries by Free World ships to North Vietnam were considerably higher in the first quarter of 1968 than in the first quarter of 1967. Most of these originated in Communist China. Cargoes from China consisted mainly of food, petroleum, and miscellaneous cargoes.

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The upward trend in deliveries is expected to continue throughout 1968, and it is likely that an increasing portion of deliveries will be carried aboard Soviet ships. It is unlikely, however, that the rate of increase noted during the first quarter will be maintained because of limitations on the discharge capacity of the port of Haiphong.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on US Riots: North Vietnam has praised the outbreak of riots in many cities in the wake of Dr. King's death as a struggle against the racist system in the US. In a lengthy editorial in the party daily Nhan Dan broadcast on 11 April, Hanoi claimed that the "revolt" of the black people in the US demonstrated the "loathsome nature of the US capitalist regime." The editorial pointed out that American Negroes now realize that freedom can not be begged for, but that it must be achieved through revolutionary violence. It said that the US is conducting a war against the Negro race and is sending great numbers of Negroes to die in Vietnam. Vietnam, the paper continued, is the first front in the resistance to US imperialism. The second front is right in the US and is composed of the black people's struggle, the American people's protest movement against "the US aggressive war in Vietnam," and the working class struggle against oppression and exploitation.

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